



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3605

November 3, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, Southwest  
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Dawn O'Connell  
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, Southwest  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Secretary Becerra and Assistant Secretary O'Connell,

Surging cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) have overwhelmed children's hospitals and pediatric ICUs across the country.<sup>1</sup> We have heard from hospitals about the dwindling number of ICU beds and the extraordinary measures implemented to respond to the unprecedented surge.

RSV can resemble the common cold in children, however, serious cases can lead to dangerous complications that require immediate medical attention. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, close to 75% of pediatric hospital beds nationwide are full.<sup>2</sup> This recent surge in RSV cases is particularly concerning for health care professionals as it comes early in the cold and flu season and indicates conditions may worsen before improving.

As we enter the winter months, expanding resources and support for providers serving children during the spike in RSV is critically important. As RSV continues to threaten hospital capacity for children across the country, we urge the Secretary of Health and Human Services acting through the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response to make available pediatric beds and ICU capacity and expand support as needed.

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<sup>1</sup> Carla Johnson, *What's behind worrying RSV surge in US children's hospitals?*, ASSOCIATED PRESS (Oct. 24, 2022), <https://apnews.com/article/science-health-covid-pandemics-072e11e5e3af77aac19fe95773a69610>.

<sup>2</sup> HealthData.gov, COVID-19 Reported Patient Impact and Hospital Capacity by State Timeseries, <https://healthdata.gov/Hospital/COVID-19-Reported-Patient-Impact-and-Hospital-Capa/g62h-syeh/data>.

As confirmed cases of RSV continue to spike, timely support for hospitals and doctors is crucial. We request that you provide us with information on the Department's actions supporting pediatric hospital capacity during this crisis no later than November 15, 2022. We look forward to hearing more about your efforts to support the essential care for our nation's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted Budd".

Ted Budd  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Earl L. 'Buddy' Carter".

Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tony Gonzalez".

Tony Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Madison Cawthorn".

Madison Cawthorn  
Member of Congress